Worship at Home Service: Sunday 5th October 2025, with Revd Alan Sharp.

StF 353 Jesus is Lord https://tinyurl.com/yc668xbz

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
For by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry:
Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord! Praise him with Halleluiahs, for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal, In flesh he came, to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding, Yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free: *Chorus*

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
From death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sent his Holy Spirit
To show by works of power that Jesus is Lord:
Chorus

Opening prayer

Creator of our world, saviour of our souls,
guardian of our hearts, we come to you today,
acknowledging that we are yours. We belong to you,
and in our belonging, we find faith –faith to live our lives,
celebrating your goodness and faithfulness to us. **Amen.**

Reading: Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.
"Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'?
Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me; put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'?

Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?
So, you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

Reflection:

Sometimes a Bible passage leaves us puzzled, and this is one of them. The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" Now, many of us would echo the apostles' request: Increase our faith. But the reply of Jesus is a little confusing: "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. "

Now, I can't find any reference to anyone doing this! Not in the New Testament, and not in the history of the Church. And I don't think that's because no-one has had great faith - the apostles did some mighty things.
But just before this Jesus has said: *If your brother sins. And he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent", forgive him"*. So perhaps it's no wonder that the disciples say, "Increase our faith." Perhaps none of them felt up to that. They needed an increase of faith.
But when Jesus answers, he's not really talking about mulberry trees. He talks about the duties of a servant to do whatever the master asks, and says the servants would not be thanked. This seems a strange story but I think Jesus is saying that they will be confronted with many challenging situations - forgiving other people is just the start - and yet if they kept faith, even as small as mustard seed, then they would find courage to do the impossible.

Being a Christian makes demands - whether it's learning to forgive, or loving your neighbour. Sometimes life knocks us off our feet. In a "Thought for the Day" a man spoke about how his life was changed when his son was born with Downs Syndrome. Sometimes the challenges of our Christian life will seem like saying to a tree "Be uprooted and planted in the sea"

Have you heard the statement: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God!" It was the theme of a sermon preached in 1792 by William Carey, a cobbler from this county, who became convinced that the British Church had a duty for overseas mission.

The following year this cobbler sailed for India and stayed there for the remaining 41 years of his life, suffering the loss of family members and many personal tribulations. But he translated the entire Bible into Bengali, then supervised others in translating it into five other main languages and parts of 209 other languages and dialects. If anyone had faith it was William Carey. That was uprooting a mulberry tree!

How do people have such faith?

Another reading set for today is Psalm 37:1-8. This Psalm has the secret of faith - it's there in the verbs of each sentence. I add the passage for further reflection – especially reflect on the verbs, in bold print.

Psalm 37:1-8

Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.
Trust in the LORD and do good; live in the land and enjoy security.
Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will make your vindication shine like the light and the justice of your cause like the noonday.
Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.
Refrain from anger and forsake wrath. Do not fret it leads only to evil.

StF 518 Father hear the prayer we offer https://tinyurl.com/yyzmpnrw

Father, hear the prayer we offer: not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness, in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger, Father, be there at our side.

Prayers of intercession

We pray for those who feel small and insignificant:
we pray hope for those living in poverty
we pray encouragement for those who feel neglected;

we pray courage for those who feel afraid;
we pray boldness for those who feel inadequate;
we pray protection for all in minorities;
we pray trust for those with fragile faith;
We pray peace for all who are living in conflict;
we bring these prayers in Jesus' name. A**men.**

The Lord's Prayer

StF 439: Abba Father https://tinyurl.com/5n6msx7m
Abba Father, let me be, Yours and Yours alone
May my will forever be, Ever more Your own
Never let my heart grow cold, Never let me go
Abba Father, let me be, Yours and Yours alone
(The video repeats)

Benediction.
May you find joy in your duties, hope in your heart; and faith the size of a mustard seed, to guide and empower you, moment by moment,
day by day. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. **Amen**